

REMARKS

Claims 2-3, 5-12 are now pending in the application. Claims 1, 4, and 13-18 are cancelled. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

The Examiner states that claim 5 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, Applicant has amended claim 5 to include the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Therefore, claim 5 should now be in condition for allowance.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-4, and 9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Matsuda et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,025,012). With regard to claims 1 and 4, the rejection is rendered moot by cancellation.

With regard to claims 2, 3, and 9, the rejection is respectfully traversed. Applicant notes that claims 2, 3, and 9 each either directly or indirectly depend from claim 5, which defines over the prior art and is in condition for allowance, as discussed above. Therefore, claims 2, 3, and 9 also define over the prior art. Reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections are respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 4, 6-8, and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Matsuda et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,025,012) in view of Kohno et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,130,682). With regard to claims 1 and 4, the rejection is rendered moot by cancellation.

With regard to claims 6-8 and 11, the rejection is respectfully traversed. Applicant notes that claims 6-8 and 11 each either directly or indirectly depend from claim 5, which defines over the prior art and is in condition for allowance, as discussed above. Therefore, claims 6-8 and 11, also define over the prior art. Reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections are respectfully requested.

Claim 10 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Matsuda et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,025,012) in view of Hosaka et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,896,292). This rejection is respectfully traversed. Applicant notes that claim 10 depends from claim 5, which defines over the prior art and is in condition for allowance, as discussed above. Therefore, claim 10 also defines over the prior art. Reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections are respectfully requested.

Claim 12 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Matsuda et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,025,012) in view of Shimizu et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,554,891). This rejection is respectfully traversed. Applicant notes that claim 12 depends from claim 5, which defines over the prior art and is in condition for allowance, as discussed above. Therefore, claim 12 also defines over the prior art. Reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: June 28, 2006

By: 

G. Gregory Schivley, Reg. 27,382
Bryant E. Wade, Reg. No. 40,344

HARNESS, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.
P.O. Box 828
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48303
(248) 641-1600

[GGS/BEW/MPD/cn]